



Wellness Tips

Defusing Hate and Handling Racial and Ethnic Violence

In the wake of recent tragedies, many of us understandably feel anger and outrage toward those responsible for these unimaginable crimes against humanity. However, we must guard against allowing our own feelings of anger to be channeled inappropriately. Sadly, racial violence and tension have already escalated in response to the terrorist attacks.

Government officials, including President Bush, have promised Americans that those responsible for the attacks on our country will be found and held accountable. As the process of bringing the terrorists to justice slowly unfolds, we are best served by giving foreign-born Americans and visitors to our country reasons to trust and respect Americans, rather than reasons to fear and hate us. Unity and support among all races and creeds are strongly-held American values, as well as crucial to the nation's healing process.

During this time when threats of violence are very real, hate crimes can take many forms, including intimidation and harassment. In the unfortunate situation that you or someone you know is confronted by ethnic or racial violence, here are some practical steps you can take:

How to Handle Racial or Ethnic Violence¹:

1. As always, if you feel you are in immediate danger, dial 9-1-1.
2. Remember the incident to the best of your ability, including date and time, circumstances, and descriptions of the individuals involved.
3. If you are physically injured, seek medical attention and make caregivers aware of the circumstances surrounding the attack.
4. File a formal complaint with your local police department.
5. Inform your local government representatives of the situation so they may take community action to prevent further occurrences.
6. Determine whether you wish to take further legal actions, such as filing a civil suit or a compensation claim.
7. Seek a support group for victims of crime or advice from a therapist, if necessary.

Call Your EAP

If you are experiencing anxiety or fear due to increased racial tension, or if you are feeling anger or hatred toward other ethnic groups or races, you may wish to contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP counselors are available 24 hours a day, every day of the week, to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you. Information, self-help tools, and other resources are also available online at www.MagellanAssist.com.

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¹ www.racereactions.about.com

